



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: April 23, 2020

Agenda Item: Montana Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan **Action Needed:** Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 Minutes

Background: The current Montana CWD Management Plan details the 2014 Decision Notice by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks regarding FWP's surveillance and response to CWD detections in the state. Proposed to the commission and functionally implemented in the fall of 2017 with Montana's first positive CWD detection in free-ranging wild deer, the plan builds upon previous FWP management plans and adds significant logistical details for the plan's practical implementation. The plan version presented to the commission in April 2020 includes proposed adjustments based upon implementation experience gained through surveillance, testing, management, and outreach efforts since the first Montana detection in 2017. The intent of previous plans and proposed changes to the current plan is still to: 1) limit the spread of CWD since it has now been detected in Montana; 2) maintain or reduce the prevalence of CWD in specific locations once detected; and 3) improve communication and outreach on CWD with the public, other agencies, and within FWP.

Born out of real experience with surveillance, testing, and outreach efforts since 2017, most of the proposed plan edits are relatively minor. In addition to an evolving approach to the assessment and prioritization of next surveillance areas, the most significant proposed change is to replace area-specific carcass transportation restriction zones with a statewide carcass disposal requirement that would apply to all deer, elk, and moose carcasses wherever in the state they are harvested by hunters or as vehicle-killed salvage. In pursuit of a simpler message easier for FWP to communicate and for the public to hear, this proposed language essentially requires brain and spinal cord material to be left at the kill site or deposited in a class II landfill. Another proposed change is to prohibit the use of cervid-derived glandular scents to limit the potential for spread.

Public Involvement Process & Results: FWP has met with the citizen advisory panel to review implementation experience and how that experience might best guide any adjustments to the plan. The panel supported a carcass disposal requirement and expressed concern over glandular scents. FWP has also met with staff from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) given their authority and understanding of landfills. Any commission adoption on April 23 will be made available for additional public review and comment prior to a later final adoption.

Alternatives and Analysis: Not adopting proposed plan changes and a glandular scent restriction for public comment would limit the commission's and department's opportunity to consider input from a concerned public that has similarly experienced implementation since 2017 as landowners, hunters, meat processors, taxidermists, and conservationists.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends that the commission approve for public comment the revised Montana Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan and a prohibition on cervid-derived glandular scents. These proposed changes directly address the intent of Montana's plan.

Proposed Motion: I move the commission adopt for public comment the revised Montana Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan and the prohibition on cervid-derived glandular scents as presented by the department.